


A Passion for Teaching:
Creating and Establishing a New Scholarship Fund
For the Department of Special Education

An Honors Thesis Creative Project Rationale

by

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Abstract

This rationale explains the process of raising funds and working with the University Foundation to establish a new scholarship that will be awarded to a deserving student majoring in Special Education at Ball State University.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Nina Yssel for all of her time and guidance in helping me to develop ideas for my project as well as being there to support me through every step of the process. I would also like to thank Mrs. Kelly Kirby Shrock, Senior Director of Development at the University Foundation, for all of her hard work in helping me to establish the official scholarship fund, as well as encouraging me throughout the fundraising process. Lastly, I would like to thank the faculty and staff of the Teacher's College for helping me to develop and deepen my life-long passion for teaching.

"The teacher, if he is indeed wise, does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom; but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind."- Kahlil Gibran.

As a teacher in training, I have a passion for education that I knew I could never put down on paper. I could never write a mind-blowing thesis about any topic that would make an impact on the life of another future teacher like I wanted to make. Instead, I decided to develop a project that would make their college career a little easier. I chose to create a scholarship fund through the Ball State University Foundation to be awarded to a Ball State student, majoring in special education, that demonstrated a passion for teaching exceptional children: The Passion for Teaching Scholarship.

While at Ball State, I received scholarships that changed the way I looked at my education. It was no longer something I had to fit in between two jobs in order to pay tuition – it was my job. As a Whiting Scholar, there were high expectations for my academic performance as well as my overall character, but I knew I could meet these expectations. I made it a priority to demonstrate my passion through academic success, volunteerism, and dedication to becoming the best educator I could be. Creating a scholarship fund to give back to the university was simply a material way of showing my gratitude for all I have learned, the growth I have made, and the life I lived from the fall of 2003 to the winter of 2007. My hope for this award is that it acknowledges and encourages other passionate students majoring in special education to always strive for excellence.

The Process

The process of creating a scholarship fund began at the Ball State Alumni Center, home of the Ball State University Foundation. I met with Mrs. Kelly Shrock, Senior Director of Development at the Foundation. The initial meeting was a little discouraging in some respects, but Kelly herself was positive and supportive about the idea at every level. I had originally set out to create a scholarship fund that would fund itself by awarding the interest the money earned every year. Unfortunately, I came to discover that in order to do that, a minimum of \$25,000 had to be contributed. While I am not one to shy away from a challenge, raising \$25,000 in about 4 months while still going to school full-time and substitute teaching, was not a project I was ready to undertake. Luckily, Kelly informed me of several other options for the initial donation of a scholarship fund. After some discussion, we narrowed my options to one of two types of funds: an annually funded account or an expense account. The first option is an account with a \$1,000 minimum that the donor must contribute to annually and the latter being similar to any typical bank account where a set amount of money is used to start the fund (again, with a \$1,000 minimum). Once it is created, the fund is awarded upon agreed terms until it is gone, at which time I would have the choice to donate more money or allow the fund to expire. While I desperately wanted the fund to be awarded on a yearly basis, I knew I could not commit to annually fund an account at this point in my life. I decided the expense account would be my best option.

Kelly was excited to work with me on this project and assured me that together we would make this project idea a reality. This positive energy was my light in the dark. By this point I was starting to realize how big of a project this was and in all of my

excitement I had forgotten that I hate to ask people for money, which does not make the fundraising process any easier. My next step was to come up with fundraising ideas and to begin to formulate ideas concerning the determination of a recipient for the scholarship. At this point, my thesis advisor, Dr. Nina Yssel, was there to guide me.

Dr. Yssel and I met over dinner to discuss my options. She suggested I use copies of the applications from existing scholarships as an outline for creating the application for The Passion for Teaching Scholarship. One important difference I wanted to make to the application process, was to have applicants nominated by professors supervising practicum experiences. I know how hard it can be to try to put passion down on paper and I figured nomination from supervisors would mean they have seen the student in both an academic setting and during actual classroom experiences. Dr. Yssel agreed that the input from instructors would aid in decision-making, but suggested I open it to all instructors and professors in the department since there are usually only one or two practicum supervisors in any given semester. The outline for deciding the award recipient was started at this point, but would continue later.

The other topic on our agenda was planning for the fundraising. We brainstormed ideas such as raffles, one-time events, and a letter campaign. They all sounded great and I have seen similar attempts work in the past, so I figured I was on my way. My dislike of asking people to donate money was going to be tough to get past, but after such a positive meeting and discussion, I was confident I could overcome it.

All of my fundraising ideas sounded great in theory, and I had seen most of them work before, but with one major difference. When people are raising money for Riley Children's Hospital, a third-world country, or a cure for cancer, people are touched

emotionally and drawn to help the cause through donating money. Helping a college student who could probably take out loans or work an extra job to pay for school does not tug as hard at heartstrings. Of all the ideas I had for fundraising, the easiest to get started on was selling cookies and cookie dough that I made myself, so that is how it all began. I also emailed various organizations on campus to see if anyone would be interested in doing a joint fundraiser. Unfortunately, I got no responses. After discussing some ideas with friends, I learned that some were already done by other campus clubs and thus would not be a good idea. At this point, I was starting to get discouraged, but not giving up.

After another meeting with Kelly and a few more discussions with Dr. Yssel, I decided on three main fundraising tactics: 1. Cookie dough/cookie selling – Having already started, I found that people were willing to pay a good price for cookies and by donating the supplies myself, I was earning a respectable ten dollars per batch and starting to make a dent in my \$5,000 goal. 2. Letter writing campaign – I had written letters to raise money for a mission trip in 2006 to Haiti and it proved very successful. This campaign would be similar, but the list of recipients would change from family and friends to local organizations and businesses. And last but not least, 3. Business partner – I was going to look for a business in Muncie that would allow me to work with them on a profit sharing basis and appeal to their customers for help. Getting to my original goal of \$5,000 was going to be harder than I thought, so at this point, I set my sights on making the minimum \$1,000 that I had to have to officially open the fund.

Strategy number one – cookie selling – was underway. I was selling frozen, ready-to-bake dough to friends and also shipping baked cookies to friends and family.

Strategy number two – letter writing – started with a meeting with Tony Costello, the leader from my Haiti service trip who knows how to write a great support-seeking letter. After describing my project to him in detail, he gave me several ideas of what to include in the letter and suggestions on length and logistics (like including a self-addressed stamped return envelope) that would help to make my campaign as successful as possible. After two drafts, I finally had a letter I was satisfied with and sent copies to various organizations and businesses in Muncie that had connections with Ball State.

Strategy number three – local business – became a day of collecting donations at the Blue Bottle coffee shop in downtown Muncie. The owner, Tom Steiner, allowed me to set up shop at one of the small tables near the counter to pass out information and collect donations for almost eight hours. I made flyers and signs and brought a friend along for support.

Now that the money was starting to come in, it was time to make final decisions regarding the requirements and process for choosing the future winner(s) for The Passion for Teaching Scholarship. With Dr. Yssel, I discussed what makes an exemplary special education major and the best ways to make sure that kind of student is considered for the award. From Kelly, I learned how the official paper work has to look and how preferences for the recipient are written to be selective, but not so exact that a fitting recipient cannot be found. In the end, it was decided that instead of both a nomination and application process, the winner would simply be nominated by a faculty member in the Special Education department who would write a letter detailing why the student deserves the Passion for Teaching Scholarship. The letter would have to describe how the student demonstrated the three key preferences listed in the scholarship description: 1.

Student majoring in special education, preference going to junior or senior students, 2. Outstanding community service, and 3. Demonstrated diligent pursuit of proven teaching methods during their practicum experience. After this process was decided, I wrote to Jean Ulman, the faculty member in charge of scholarships for the Department of Special Education, introducing the scholarship and explaining how I would like it to be awarded. In addition, I attached a copy of a letter for her to forward to the rest of the special education faculty that explains the scholarship and nomination process. From there, it will be the job of the faculty to nominate and the scholarship committee to decide who will be awarded The Passion for Teaching Scholarship.

Results

In the end, the Passion for Teaching Scholarship became a reality. Through the combined efforts of all three fundraising strategies, I raised a total of \$1,307.58 before the final paperwork was signed on August 8, 2007. I will continue to do a little more fundraising in hopes of making the total reach at least \$1,500 which will be awarded in two \$750 awards; one each for the next two years. While I didn't reach my original goal of \$5,000, I am pleased with the contribution I was able to make and grateful for what I learned about the process of donating and creating a scholarship fund. I went out of my comfort zone by asking for contributions and I reflected upon my four years at Ball State.

Letter to Mrs. Jean Ulman:

Dear Mrs. Ulman,

I am writing this letter to inform you of a new scholarship opportunity for students majoring in special education at Ball State. As my senior honors project, I worked with Dr. Yssel to create an expendable scholarship fund entitled The Passion for Teaching Scholarship through the Ball State University Foundation and raised a little over \$1,300 to be awarded. It is my wish that the scholarship be awarded to a student majoring in any area of special education that demonstrates outstanding community service and demonstrates a passion for teaching exceptional children both in an academic setting and practicum experiences. I would love to see this fund last for at least two years, so it is my wish that the initial award be half of the fund, leaving half for next year. There is a possibility more will be added to the fund over time, but if not, the fund is expendable and will be closed once it is emptied.

Because it is nearly impossible to put personal passion on paper, I would like the winner to be nominated by his or her instructor/professor in the form of a letter of recommendation. The recommendation letters will then serve as applications to be given to either you or the scholarship committee within the department for final selection of a single winner. Attached is a letter to be forwarded to the professors and instructors in the Department of Special Education that explains the nomination process. Please forward this letter at a time you see fit in order to give the faculty ample time to consider possible nominees and compose letters of recommendation.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to help me complete this last step in the long process of creating this scholarship by finding a fitting recipient. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by email at steiner.steph@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Stephanie N. Steiner

To the professors and instructors of the special education department:

This letter is to inform you of a new scholarship to be awarded this spring for the following academic year. *The Passion for Teaching Scholarship* was created as my Honors senior project last spring. I met with the University Foundation, raised over \$1,300, and decided on the process for the selection of an award winner. The last part is where I need your help. Because I wanted the scholarship to be given to someone exhibiting a true passion for teaching and working with children with exceptionalities, I felt a standard application form and process would not be sufficient. Instead, I feel a better winner could be selected if the nominations were made by those who see special education majors in action...you. As chosen by me and specified on the scholarship fund agreement, the following are the preferred characteristics the award winner should possess:

1. Majoring in special education (any major within the department; preference to juniors and seniors)
2. Demonstrating outstanding community service; especially in working with children and people with disabilities
3. Demonstrating diligent pursuit of proven teaching methods both in the college classroom and school placement during their practicum experience

If you know a student that exemplifies the criteria above, please nominate him or her for this scholarship by writing a concise letter of recommendation explaining how they meet the criteria and how they demonstrate a true passion for teaching. These letters will then serve as applications from which the winner will be selected. The exact amount of the award will depend upon donations made between now and spring 2008, but will be between \$750.00 and \$1,000.

If you have any questions regarding the scholarship itself, its creation, purpose, or more details, feel free to contact me by email at steiner.steph@gmail.com. If you have questions regarding the nomination process, dates, or selection, please contact Dr. Merbler. Thank you in advance for taking the time to help me make the final step in my project a success, and for recognizing an outstanding student that is making a difference.

Sincerely,

Stephanie N. Steiner



Passion for Teaching Scholarship

Ball State University Foundation *Fund #8155*

THIS AGREEMENT is made by and between Stephanie Hamer (the "Donor") and the Ball State University Foundation (the "Foundation"). The Donor and the Foundation hereby establish a fund pursuant to the following terms and conditions:

1. **Name:** The name of the fund shall be the Passion for Teaching Scholarship ("Fund").
2. **Donor's Biographical Information:** Stephanie Hamer graduated from Ball State University in 2007 with degrees in Deaf Education, Special Education, and Elementary Education. Stephanie dedicated her Honors Thesis Project (Spring 2007) to creating a scholarship fund. A scholarship recipient herself, Stephanie started this fund in an effort to give back to Ball State and to future teachers who share her passion for teaching exceptional children.
3. **Purpose:** The purpose of the Fund is to provide scholarships to Ball State University students in accordance with the following preferences:
 - a. students majoring in special education, preference going to junior or senior students;
 - b. outstanding community service; and
 - c. demonstrated diligent pursuit of proven teaching methods during their practicum experience.

The Donor understands that Ball State University may implement additional criteria or restrictions so long as they do not conflict with or contradict the preferences stated in this agreement. In the event that qualified recipients cannot be identified, then the Foundation is authorized to approve recipients who match the stated preferences as reasonably as possible. In compliance with current federal regulations, if applicable, awards will be made without regard to age, race, creed, color, religion, physical or mental disability, sex, national origin, ancestry, or sexual orientation.

4. **Gifts:** The Fund was established with an outright gift of One Thousand Three Hundred Seven Dollars and Fifty-Eight Cents (\$1,307.58). Additional outright gifts or planned gifts, such as bequests from wills, trusts, life insurance, retirement plans, charitable gift annuities or other deferred gifts, may be donated to the Fund at any time, by any business or person. All gifts are entitled to the tax benefits allowed by current state and federal law.

5. **Fund Type and Management:** The Fund shall be administered as an Expendable Fund which is not a permanent endowment. All contributions to the Fund, less fees, are wholly expendable. Currently, contributions totaling One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000) are required to establish an Expendable Fund. Contributions and deposits to Expendable Funds are assessed a one time administrative fee at the time of the contribution or deposit. A fundraising fee determined by the Board may be assessed to certain contributions such as telemarketing and planned gifts.

6. **Award Cycle:** Every spring, awards will be made for the next academic year based on the Fund balance less any outstanding commitments.

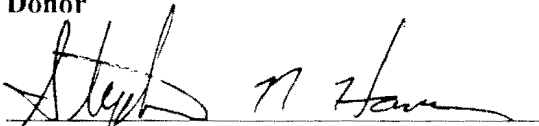
7. **Not A Separate Trust:** The Fund shall be a component part of the Foundation. All money and property donated to and/or held in the Fund shall be owned as general assets of the Foundation and shall not be segregated as trust property or as a separate trust.

8. **Publicity:** The Donor consents to publicity such as press releases, newspaper articles and other public announcements that will include the name of the Donors and the Fund, biographical information and fund purpose included in this agreement, and a description of the contributions including specific dollar amounts. Publicity regarding the Fund is the responsibility of the Department of Special Education in cooperation with the Office of University Communications.

9. **Notification:** Recipient information and a financial report on this Fund shall be sent annually to Stephanie Hamer, 120 Northland Street, Fishers, Indiana 46038. At the discretion of the Foundation, reports may include, as applicable, information on: the total return of the Foundation's assets, fees, and the spending rate applied to the period over which the total return was measured.

10. **Amendment:** In the event of changed or unanticipated circumstances or conditions that make the terms of the fund agreement impossible, illegal, impractical or incapable of fulfillment, the Donor and/or the Foundation may recommend a revision to this agreement, approximating the original intent as closely as possible. Amendments to this fund agreement shall be made pursuant to the current policies and procedures as approved by the Board.

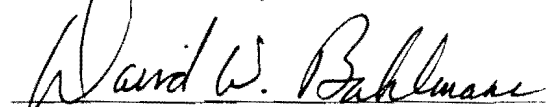
Donor


Stephanie Hamer

Date

August 8, 2007

Ball State University Foundation


David W. Bahlmann, President/CEO

Date

June 4, 2007